

An Analysis of the Dowry System in India: Causes and Remedies

Ramachandra N.U

Assistant professor, Department of Sanskrit, School of Science, Jain (Deemed to be University) JC Road, Bangalore-560027

Email Id- nu.ramachandra@jainuniversity.ac.in

Deepthi Radhakrishna

Assistant Professor, Department of Performing Arts, School of Humanities & Social Sciences, Seshadri Road, Gandhi Nagar, Jain Deemed to be University, Bangalore

Email Id- deepthirashna@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: *Dowry is the wealth or assets that the family of a bride or wife offers her spouse in some communities when a man and woman bond through marriage. In India, whenever one expresses of sexual category discrimination, dowry mechanism could be seen as the trigger for issue. It is a common belief that a female is a burden and is to be married off someday, with a dowry burden at discarding, according the country's social infrastructure. Well, the birth of a girl is an initiation for common people for long-term plans to pay off the dowry. Seemingly, this preserving project hampers the girl's potential and limits her to a male child in terms of true equality. The current paper is an attempt to investigate dowry law in general as a social matter. It was stressed that the most successful solution is to bring knowledge through community and educational awareness against this evil scheme. In order to fight against the dowry scheme, there is also the need to expand women's education.*

KEYWORDS: *Dowry, India, Conservative, Bride, Groom, Marriage, Community, Social problem, Social evil.*

INTRODUCTION

In ancient times, bride father was assisting the newly married couple with a sum of money along with the other essential things that are needed to a new family. All these things are considered as gift and blessings from the girl's father. After some time, this custom is being taken otherwise by the groom's family and this tradition of the gift and blessing become mandatory, slowly taking a notorious fame called Dowry [1]. Therefore a certain amount of commodity and a sum of the money considered as the dowry. In other words, in some races, it is consider as the bride price that cover money, asset and even movable as well immovable property.

The one more of the blessings or respect have some prevalence in some of the area of the India known as the 'meher'. The custom of the meher is slightly different from the custom of the dowry as in the dowry system that is the girl's father has to give some asset, property or the sum of the amount of the money to groom and his family then in meher, the groom has to give some amount of the money to bride as a nominal of respect or gratitude towards the bride's family. Earlier, dowry was taken as the social security to the bride in the situation of the post marry crisis as in exiled life because of the separation with the husband or unnatural death or some other conflicts [2].

The custom of the bride prices has been still prevalent in many local tribes as the basic and main tradition of the marriage. In the marriages in the Muslim community, meher and dowry both the customs are prevalent as the meher is the practices as the custom of the Muslim marriages while dowry is a social obligation. In fact, dowry as a tradition or just a notorious practices, prevalent in the all over the world in different form. Dowry is mainly linked to gender as well as asset ownership and eventually established as wealth ownership as well as delivery of gender. The delivery of wealth by gender diverges across different countries besides cultures.

Pre marriage, women's ownership of property besides assets differs widely crosswise distinct countries and cultures—such wealth distribution is primarily mediated by social trend and dowry scheme inheritance law.

There is a lot of difference between the culture, custom and tradition, apart from the language and demographic variation in India and every region has its own customs regarding marriages and other things. The dowry system has become a social evil in India because of the marriage break up and deaths due to dowry [3]. There are several incidents have taken place on the land of the India, where a bride had burnt because of the dowry in addition to this a lot of marriages come to an end by just more demand of the dowry by the groom family. There was a time, when dowry had been given by the bride's father as per his will and capacity but slowly it become a social evil as the groom family have been put the demand for the dowry.

The globalization also has put some impact on this nuance of the dowry as several incident have been reported related to the NRI marriages in India where the groom is lived in abroad and come to India for marriage. After that, a marriage is finalized on the false promises and the groom took a huge amount of money and assets as dowry [4]. But after having taken place the marriage, he just disappears with the amount of the dowry. Apart from these incidences, India has become a big market for marriage ceremony and big fat Indian marriages are famous worldwide now. Dowry are associated with the crime against women and already been considered as the legal issue to be address with the help of the law and the police.

There is little research on this topic, however news reports indicate that women were burned, poisoned, battered and provoked to undergo suicide. Infanticide and feticide issues come up as the suffering of a girl when dowry is unpaid or found insufficient. This occurs in many other countries, both in India and in comparison to non-resident Indians (NRIs). Though in Haryana an all-female police unit was launched as well as support lines in some parts of India are in operation, this is obviously not enough. Latest estimates show that the number of female children in India is dropping due to murder and abortion [5]. This, in our opinion, suggests that if there is a connection with dowry, multinational demands for marriage payments are a great problem. This paper has been written to discuss the dowry issues and causes of the death due to the dowry in addition to the steps taken by the government and other NGOs to alleviate the devil of the dowry.

DOWRY SYSTEM IN DIFFERENT DEMOGRAPHY OF THE WORLD

Dowry Culture in European besides American Countries:

In European countries, the dowry practice was widespread from the mediaeval era to the mid-nineteenth century. In the fourteenth century, by mandating parental approval, clandestine weddings in Europe as well as the management of Catholic churches encouraged the practice of dowry in weddings, which primarily violated the freedom of brides to select their husband. This tradition of dowry in marriages was common in Italy; however, mutual harmony in marriages was in repetition in Iberian Peninsula due to shared property ownership and equitable inheritance. During those times in England, marriageable daughters used to be presumed as a valuable commodity for their guardians since noble families were improving their social standing by extending their partnerships with royal families. Records of legal proceedings showed that dowry was common in England in the thirteenth century.

The circumstance of dowry practices in Romania in mid-nineteenth century, nevertheless, remained distinct. While comparable to additional traditions, dowry remained something of a daughter's property at Romania, but bride price assets were under the ownership of male associates of bridesmaid's paternal family, besides they consumed many legal privileges in that regard; finally, women's lawful emancipation providing deserted, divorced women including their children with social security [5]. The dowry tradition was already in place in the native populations of America, but it was strongly affected by European colonies, however unlike asian

countries, it remained a reciprocal argument of gifts amongst bride-and-bride relatives. In Mexico, dowry culture was imported by Spanish colonial rules; but after wedding, assets in addition to sum of dowry were recycled to occur beneath bride's influence.

Similarly, during fourteenth century, dowry tradition was in effect in Russian culture; though, property shifted in name of present was only wholly owned by bride after death or mishap occurred to bride, the sum of dowry would have been consumed for generous purposes only; and the groom's domestic had no right finished [6]. There are a separate dowry culture experienced in Tajikistan, besides in the name of dowry, there is no transfer of land, a somewhat mutual gift of outdated clothes to bride as well as groom families.

Dowry in Middle East Countries:

There Jahez contained ingredients suitable to everyday life, nevertheless jazz became diverse than meher, which is provided to woman's parents by groom's family as per Sharia . The Iranian custom of dowry is 500 years old. In other Islamic nations, Turkey, similar to Iranian dowry tradition, there were a standardized decoration of dowry custom. Consequently, in Turkey, dowry-related corruptions are registered.

Dowry in Southeast Asian Countries:

China's bride price tradition is very close to India's. In estate sharing, daughters will not grasp right; stuff would be shared equally between sons. The portion of daughter will, however, be assumed in form of a present. The custom of dowry is currently declining in modern times. Comparable to Islamic countries, as Iran, Egypt, Turkey, besides Morocco, Pakistan in addition to Afghanistan shadow essence as well as pattern of the dowry system, and dowry-related violence also takes place in Pakistan and Afghanistan [7]. In Sri Lanka, however, a gradual shift in dowry practice is observed-it is decreasing rapidly related to supplementary South Asian countries, while the dowry custom was deeply ingrained in Sri Lanka's social material and also witnessed dowry-related offences.

AN INDIAN SITUATION OF DOWRY CUSTOM

In Southeast Asia, India is largest republic subsequently China, seeing population, geographical area, in addition to cultural diversity. In India social culture, dowry is practiced. A regional study of dowry repetition with a socio-economic and legal perspective may provide an augmented insight into dowry problem besides its relationship to gender parity due to the socio-cultural, and provincial multiplicity in India. At the global level, this is more understanding of Indian dowry custom situation can be generalized.

In Indian context, dowry is classified as a commodity in form of money, goods, in addition to movable property that is given as a condition of marriage by bride's family to groom's family. This tradition has *continued* for numerous decades [8]. The concept of dowry is not limited to the arrangement or demand payment before and during the marriage, but also includes post-marriage arguments. Any valuable material granted or decided to be offered in assembly with marriage should, however, be word 'dowry'. In field of dowry, customary expenditures in assembly with birth of a child or other formalities are not included.

The roots of settlement can be traced back to the custom of offering gifts in form of jeweler, electrical appliances, bedding, furniture, utensils, crockery, or household ingredients needed for again married couples to begin married life. However, there are numerous remarks by authors concerning the existence of dowry philosophy in ancient in addition to mediaeval time that conflict with each other and are unable to produce any clear fact.

Regional as well as Community Difference of Dowry:

In India's modern age, dowry was a prevalent tradition. Based on geography and class, around some distinctions on dowry pervasiveness. Of all classes, states in north are more to be involved in dowry system, and settlement is more to be in form of substantial in addition to movable goods. The bride system is additional common in the south, and is more frequently in form of terrestrial or other tradition products. The social construction of wedding, which holds matrimonial within or adjacent to family ties, is related to this scheme.

The continuation of dowry is also linked to the women's department on the basis of its share of possessions privileges. The Christian Sequence Act of Travancore. It recommends a portion of family possessions christened 'Streedhanam' for brides. In greatest cases, marriage is mediated through regard to the available quantity for streedhanam. But question now ascends as to by what means such an evil scheme has persisted deprived of women's cooperation itself being truthful [9]. The vigorous cooperation of females is guaranteed by complicated social authorization arrangement that legitimizes violence through framework of control within family that has the social permission. It is in cases, predominantly mother in law, who had donated to danger. This bounces rise to scientific community.

In most cultures, religions, castes, and regions of India, tradition of dowry is predominant. However, because of direct monetary benefits, cultural and group variations don't prevent this activity. The tradition of dowry is highly prevalent in Indian states of Bihar, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh; these states likewise report high rates of dowry-related deceases. The custom of dowry is practiced in both northern and southern regions, even among Christian as well as Muslim societies; but settlement is experienced among both high in addition to lower classes in northern region, but it is mainly amongst high-class people in southern regions.

In Punjab, where sex ratio is very low however there are large amounts of recorded cases of sexual violence, the demand for dowry money is growing. Dowry, on the other hand, is widely practised in Kerala, which has the highest sex proportion and literacy rate in India. Due to Kerala's major concentration among women, forced marriage deaths are much less common [10]. Despite the fact that divorce does not seem to be a safe practise for matrimonial alliances, it can be a viable option for women who are trapped in abusive marriages. In Kerala, smooth divorced facilitation and recognition of women's rights keep women from dying as a result of explore alternative deaths. Punjab as well as Kerala both have a common trend: high levels of immigration to overseas countries, which raises wealth and community status, and thus the grooms' dowry price.

CAUSES OF THE DOWRY

Various details have been recommended as reason of dowry repetition in India. Among these influences, economic besides social factors are additional responsible. Causes of present are given as follows:

Economic Influences:

There are numerous economic factors subsidizing to dowry scheme. Some of these include systems of tradition and economic status of the bride. Particular claim that inheritance points to finances and poor legal establishments put women at a shortcoming, with traditions left only to children. It plants women reliant on on their husbands and in-laws, who sustain dowry once she gets married. Before 1956, also during British Raj, girl child had no right in inherit riches of their family. In 1956, under Hindu Succession Act, India gave daughters and sons equal legal status among Hindu, Sikh and Jain families.

Despite new succession rule, settlement has sustained as a system by which parent property is allocated to a girl child by a communal process at her marriage, somewhat than death of the parent by a slow Federal Court

controlled procedure under the Hindu Succession Act. Settlement provided economic and financial protection to women in their wedding in form of transportable assets, at least in principle. This helped avoid the break-up of family wealth and provided the bride with protection at the same time. This scheme can also be seen as a pre-mortem inheritance, as she can be cut off from family estate pending a woman is obtainable with movable gifts.

Social Factors:

In parts of India, the arrangement and kinship of marriage relate to dowry. Matrimony typically follows a patrilocal structure in the north, where groom is not related with family member. Perhaps because of exclusion of bride's family after marriage as a method of pre-mortem inheritance for the bride, this scheme promotes dowry. Marriage is most frequently done within bride's family in the south, for instance with close relations or cross-cousins, besides at a closer corporeal distance to family. Furthermore, brides will be able to receive property, which types her more attractive in matrimonial, reducing probability of dowry over the price arrangement of the bride.

Marriage traditions that might disturb dowry, significant considerations to consider are social duties or rituals, besides parents' prospects of dowry. A study presented that while people's arrogances about dowry are shifting, dowry continues to prevail. 75 percent of students replied in a study conducted by experts that dowry has not important to wedding, but 50 percent of their parents' anticipated dowry [11]. Though India advanced rights of women, women endure to be in a secondary role in their societies. Some important influences that play into dowry organization, and how abundant power a woman has finished her marriage, are women's schooling, income, besides fitness.

Religious Influences:

With relation to the practices of dowry, the Shastras, the reservoir of Indian culture and heritage, are complete. Such examples are the marriage hymns of Rigveda and Atharvaveda. Eight ways of marriage is accepted by the Smritis. It remained only in marriage with Brahma. It had been only in gifts besides gifts as he was able to have enough money a man of larger character. The talent to be offered in settlement was thus left fully at discretion of father of brides. A strange development, matrimonial had not achieved land, was experienced in Medieval India. Every ancestor wanted to espouse his daughter previously puberty to a man on devout as well as common grounds, even with a proposal of currency required by groom's father that perseverance on part of father of bride stripped of the rudiments of will from act that was part of repetition previous. Dowry, which has been a part of Kanyadan rite, has been turned into practice.

Dowry, known as Vardakshina, approved by Hindu faith, spread beyond Hinduism to develop part of marriage beside distinct castes in addition to lines among different groups. Economic differentiation depends on the development of a new community of elites and growing social mobility. While economic heterogeneity strengthened caste in addition to kinship continued dominant to social life, new circumstances also enabled lower casts to imitate high caste's life style in addition to conduct..

Illiteracy:

With India's low literacy rate, it is very true to regard it as primary cause of various communal evils. They aspect many atrocities owed to dowry conversation practices from the section that is not informed about the rules and laws. They have left with pint-sized or without choice and have to follow demands of family of groom, which, if not fulfilled, indications to women being abused.

Low Position of Women:

It is very clear that the role of women in the civilization is not equal. Here, plight does not end. Rather, civilization owes the build-up of infrastructure to the fruitful participation of both sexes. It is, however, significantly overlooked, and the women in such a setup are the ultimate sufferers. The institution of dowry is invention of such a mindset and is primary motive behind the nation's women's plight.

CONCLUSION

A deep-seated cultural phenomenon is custom of settlement in Indian matrimonies. The exceptionally high grade of gender disparity besides female deprivation are India's biggest communal failures. In reducing the frequency of its occurrence, the Dowry Proscription Act of 1961, which prohibited practice, was unusually unsuccessful. This Performance did not remove the dowry request that is still amenable experienced in India by philanthropic it another name, such as the bride's share. Dowry is an ancient tradition that existed at the time of Kanyadana in India and other nations as a symbol of a gift, which means giving the bride to the family of the bridegroom as a gift. Dowry is presently known at the time of matrimony as a assignment of property from woman's parents to groom's personal. Property and various gifts are passed to the family of the groom at this time. Originally, dowry was used as a way both to sanctify material wealth and also to boost marital social position. In India, marriages are usually decided by the potential spouses' relations.

REFERENCES

- [1] J. Belur, N. Tilley, N. Daruwalla, M. Kumar, V. Tiwari, and D. Osrin, "The social construction of 'dowry deaths,'" *Social Science and Medicine*, 2014, doi: 10.1016/j.socscimed.2014.07.044.
- [2] M. Alston, K. Whittenbury, A. Haynes, and N. Godden, "Are climate challenges reinforcing child and forced marriage and dowry as adaptation strategies in the context of Bangladesh?," *Women's Studies International Forum*, 2014, doi: 10.1016/j.wsif.2014.08.005.
- [3] S. Sekhri and A. Storeygard, "Dowry deaths: Response to weather variability in India," *Journal of Development Economics*, 2014, doi: 10.1016/j.jdeveco.2014.09.001.
- [4] S. Anderson and C. Bidner, "Property rights over marital transfers," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 2015, doi: 10.1093/qje/qjv014.
- [5] V. Jeyaseelan, S. Kumar, L. Jeyaseelan, V. Shankar, B. K. Yadav, and S. I. Bangdiwala, "DOWRY DEMAND and HARASSMENT: PREVALENCE and RISK FACTORS in India," *Journal of Biosocial Science*, 2015, doi: 10.1017/S0021932014000571.
- [6] J. van Willigen and V. Channa, "Law, Custom, and Crimes against Women: The Problem of Dowry Death in India," *Human Organization*, 1991, doi: 10.17730/humo.50.4.m844g33545480687.
- [7] R. Arunachalam and T. D. Logan, "On the heterogeneity of dowry motives," *Journal of Population Economics*, 2016, doi: 10.1007/s00148-015-0544-1.
- [8] M. O'Connor, "Dowry-related domestic violence and complex posttraumatic stress disorder: a case report," *Australasian Psychiatry*, 2017, doi: 10.1177/1039856217700464.
- [9] M. Alfano, "Daughters, dowries, deliveries: The effect of marital payments on fertility choices in India," *Journal of Development Economics*, 2017, doi: 10.1016/j.jdeveco.2016.11.004.
- [10] P. Jeffery, "Supply-and-demand demographics: dowry, daughter aversion and marriage markets in contemporary north India," *Contemporary South Asia*, 2014, doi: 10.1080/09584935.2014.899982.
- [11] S. Roy, "Empowering women? Inheritance rights, female education and dowry payments in India," *Journal of Development Economics*, 2015, doi: 10.1016/j.jdeveco.2014.12.010.